TODAY IS OURS

Being some reflections
on Sahaj Marg.

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BY. G. VIJAYA RANGACHARY, M. Sc., LL. B.

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A SUBMISSION

As the sun of spirituality, His holines Mahatma Ramchandraji Maharaj of Shahjahan pur (Uttar Pradesh State), blazes trail, each winter through the south, and hundreds of men and women gather unto his Grace, the scene is a wonder of an Immencity in Simplicity. Everything expect this notable event appears complex, pompous and empty by contrast.

Our Nuclear Era, despite a glut of goods blessed by the advancing technology, presents an arid scene, short of everything, and more specifically of vision, dynamism, verve, guidance and perspective, lacking which all other plentitude proves futile and purposeless. So the least little done to remind one of the glory stated at the outset, creating a capacity for the Divine, as it were, would but be adding to that unerring lead, the benefits of which to the aspiring mankind can no longer be gainsaid.

This pamphlet is presented in such hope and it arises from a paper submitted to the Divine Master on 9—12—1968 at cuddapah (Andhra Pradesh State) dealing on some aspects how right Bhavan (a fundamental aspiration) may be helpful to an Anveshana (frantic search for the fulfilling kind) of God, leading imperceptibly to that Avedana (Pain or restlessness) which would, assist an aspirant to the Grace of a Perfect Master, that is the beginning of the end of every spiritual quest.

3-6-54 1/1, Himayatnagar,
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G. VIJAYA RANGA CHARY,

1. SPANGLED BUT SPARSE

1 : 1 So is life today, there is no leadership equal to creating a capacity for thinking, leave alone achieving. All good and great values appear to be at discount. Man seems to be working at cross purposes with himself. A change for better is welcomed everywhere. And Providence is willing to concede the need of our times. Nature is acting surely though imperceptibly. One has to rise to receive the silent Benediction, and for this one has to prepare from his own fund first.

1:2 Years ago, when we were unborn or very young Knut Hamsun, thc Norwegian Nobel Laureate, gave the world his book : " The Greater Hunger " Among his other works is also the novel entitled : " Two vagabonds ", The hunger dealt in the first and the abondon covered in the second relate the first find of man namely, Sex, and this dominant urge is almost deified and compared with the bread hunger which is known to offlict one from the cradle to the grave. Those coming by the books named must normally derive the inspiration they are out to evoke. But as Providence wills, an opposite but salutary effect may also result. I write as one saved from the wisdom of these Award-winning works.

1:3 I vaguely wondered then why a book should not be available on: "The Highest Hunger." Many years later only, I could have the "Reality at Dawn" which speaks of spiritual hunger as the highest.

1:4 What I have related is significant from this angle, namely, that adjudications of even the highest bodies which have, nevertheless, large claims on the young alumni and inspire their future course of life, may not always be wholesome to growing minds. Or to be charitable to these bodies they may help to evoke quite a different type of urge, which may not be considered less evident, because it is more dormant. This kind of urge would be good to class as "Bhavana" or a fundamental aspiration. Albeit expressed in many ways and different tongues, this aspiration in men should yet remain their abiding trait, ready to blossom into higher life with the touch of a rare Master at the opportune moment. Inscrutable indeed are the ways of God who can turn a disadvantage to specifie advantage. At any rate, the sex urge need not have claimed such a learned treatment as of Knut Hamsun's. Biology could have taken better care of it.

1 : 5 Times may have changed, perhaps, since my University days for we have now launched into the Space Age from the then emerging Jet Age. Thanks too to the material giantisms posed by the technological advaces of the U, S. and the U.S.S.R. varieties, it has become harder for the modern youth to sort out from a glitter and glamour of environmental influences, as to what should be

good for their growth, and what indeed growing itself means and is. Nevertheless, the fundamental aspiration is beckoning to them, and in my opinion. a sympathetic approah to the youth would release that aspiration from their prescnt hide-outs. This approach can be from a point somewhat different from the traditional one of Vichara being compulsorily the fore-runner of Vyavahara or Vichara, Achara and Prachara being the sole accepted bases of higher activity. Modernity have no patience for all that systematic deliberation or going the lengths of the learned word. It asks for a prompt delivery of whatever goods are advertised to be conveyed.

I : 6 May we, therefore, make a simple approach say at the understanding of a basic aspiration by sympathetically looking at a common phenomenon presenting to us as this; namely of men and women from all walks of life,otherwise heterodox or fond of comfort, seeking the hardship of a pilgrimage, the humility of assocating with a holy personage, the discomfort of a shuddering dip in the ice-cold waters of Northern rivers or the turbid currents of Southern Sangam or flocking in thousands to melas likc the Kumbh. If we do not wish to be called scoffers, which, at any rate, is not a dignified term to bear nor would it be meeting the issue, nay, beg of it all the more, we may not dismiss these motivations as sheer madness or utter non-sense.

I : 7 To be sure, both heterodoxy and orthodoxy are idiocies of a kind, and what is more, both the kinds are combined in the actions named. The composition of the groups mentioned range from the Urban to the rural, from fashion mongers to fanatic flayers, from the most learned to the most ignorant, from the highest to the lowest, from holy men to hypocritical mendicants and from honest persons to total thugs. This medley of association needs a right looking for the base it must be emanating from. In my opinion, a specific urge lies behind the acts named, and I would like to believe that, reduced to a pure form, such an urge is the aspiration to seek for one's truth; to live a higher life of joy, beauty and love; to broader consciousness by thought, training and experience; till one can live and move in a fuller consciousness which would encompass all created things.

2. ABOUT A CONVERSATION

2 : 1 A group of young friends drawn from the Science faculty of the College I had left thirty eight years ago met me recently to say that it had been a 'job' for them to locate me whose name had continued to appear in their College prospectus for several years as holder of the Senior Sturge Science Scholarship. I begged apology of them for not living in a respectable surrounding and otherwise too displaying an anonymity, where a simple name board could well have removed an avoidoble Inconvenience. Conversing for a few moments on odds of Science, marvels of technological advance and of the amazing strides made by Soviet Russia in Space Science, they, launched me into the field of Self-Culture, presumably, as a concession to my age and as perhaps due to an Old Boy of their College who had lost his way all through by an indifferent career.

2 : 2 We discussed Tolstoy, Gandhi and Tagore. And then one of the group parried: "Yes, was there not one among our Chief Ministers whose favourite boast, and even a point of pardonable pride and distinction, was that he rose to be where and what he was although he had not been with Gandhiji, in deed, not even has seen him in flesh and blood?" This acted like the Proverbial

trigger and the whole group burst into a babel of voices purporting to say- "Sir your generation has woefully lacked in ambition, and if we may, say, wanting in all progressive values, generally. That is how the country has sunk to to low depths of going on the knee for food, Whatever the euphemisms said to the contrary. You held no resurgent attitudes, lotus-eating all the time, letting a free hand to the exploiter and the black-marketeer, who should have been promptly clapped behind bars in any other country as Public Enemy Number One. In foreign countries, the black market is not even countenanced, the smallest scent of it being pounced upon by the Authority that be and the offender visited by heavy fines and gaoling too. Your generation has corrupted public life by inaction, indiffereuce and even by active co-operation with the offending elements." "Was not all this mischief," they added "due to the religious dope being systematically administered to the ill and under-educated people from all vantagc places by the self-styled Swamis and Scholars? Millions of words are belched out to lull the masses into ineptitude and complacence words often of self-informed content, His Master's Voice, so to say, quoting liberally, however from scriptural text and Puranic anectode, mischievously torn from their context, so that people may participate in the national sins as though only doing the word of God. "Little wonder", they concluded, "that we have returned Spineless Goverments from time to time, who talk and talk of this

ameliorative measure and that, but never do perform."

2:3 It appeared as though they were placing an ominous charge-sheet against me! I said that while I might agree with the generality of what has been said, I would not agree that the boot was entirely on the foot of the older generation. The situation they said was indeed said better in the press and on the platform, if any, with a greater gusto, wealth of data, and weight of argument. But would they excuse me, if I said that they too were no better and had their boot on the wrong foot? For the bulk of both the generations, the past and the present, havc lacked in essential social and human values. The ball was being unnecessarily tossed from one Court to the other. If the older generation had stood, largely, for a blind orthodoxy, the present have generally plumped for a heretic heterodoxy Both were idiocies of a kind, holding no goals and directions, showing no sense of purpose. Better would it be that the modern youth are not caught in the eddies of material giantisms whether of the U. S. or U.S.S.R. varieties. They should not get that drowned with the outward glamour and get that drunk with the sparkle of surface standards, outward superiorities, and technological excellences. Money-wise, Yes. But culture-wise, the West is no better than the East. Opportunity.wise; perhaps, Yes. But affection-wise we leave the West miles behind. Technology-

wise, again, Yes But they are reaching a point where it is said that the U.S.A cannot keep the dollar aright unless it went to War every five years and had created chaos and confusion in other lands under the ostensible garb of containing communism, but really feeling obliged to keep the technological machine agoing for maintaining their National Economy. Research-wise, certainly, Yes, as far as the scientific field is concerned. But otherwise we have no cause to feel low and down. Blaming the past may indeed be a way of escaping your own responsibility for the present. You are aware that we have cut the teeth of independence very late in the day, We have also inherited many problems and national and social liabilities from the out-going British Power, who for well-nigh two centuries had impoverished our country by resort to a feudal and fascist revenue system and, what is graver, injected the poisonous slavish virus into our body politic.

2:4 And all said, no outward show can be the whole picture. We have to reckon with a population, next only to China, a population which was given to us by the British again, half-hungry and half-naked and illiterate almost, a population the size of which, with its own problems even under a brighter auspices, was not given to either the U.S. or the U.S.R. So it is not the mere gains of Science which should catch your eye. If you would but look,

as did Max Muller, you would discover your glories of Cluture. The twain indeed should meet and complete the picture—the gains and the glories. Otherwise there would be no fullness of achievement, no richness of posture and no harmony in attitudes. It would be all 'design' and no 'purpose', all 'weft' and no 'warf,' the resulting texture necessarily lacking in strength and durability. Do not run away with the despair of a Keats, who had mis-said: "East is East, West is West, the twain shall never meet" Rather entertain the optimism that the twain shoult meet for the lasting benefit of both.

2:5 I did not think my friends relished my treat. But having asked for the trouble they could not but feeling helpless. So I invited them to forget it all and enlighten me instead on what they would consider to be the right stuff on which ambition should stand ond could flourish? Because that was their basic premise and the lack of ambition was their main charge against the older generation. There was no response for a long time. The silence was proving Ominous. Being students of Science, I thought that at least one of them would say that his ambition would be to secure a Nobel Prize, the highest recognised Award in that field. Evidently they had not given a serious thought to the question of ambition which they nevertheless, wanted to kindle in others.

2:6 I had, therefore, to take the initiative and stimulate their imagination by the unusual course of a series of rude questions as these: "Would you conssder it a worthwhile ambition," I began, as some quarters have specifically said it to be so, and some dailies made it out as the outstanding achievement of the Age overshadowing and outstripping even the exploits of Aristotle and Socrates blessed with the same fiirst name as the Greek Celebrite in question; namely, of the prospect that an aging billionnaire widower should marry an eligible widow, given children by the late first gentleman of the United States of America? Or of the aspiration to secure the billion itself though this should far be the lesser romance what with more than one already in the field? Should the ambition be the acquisition of an Empire and the sway over continents, after what has been seen of a Genghis Khan, Napoleon, and in more recent history, of Hitler, Mussolini and the Mikado, famed as the axis Aces in the last World War? Or, in a profounder key, would you have the lesson go into you of the Tolstoy story you have earlier referred: "How much of land does a man require" Or, may your ambition be the olympic distinctions, winning four golds of which at the Mexican venue of it recently, a Czechoslovak damsel slipped into a hurried matrimony? Or, could it be the distinction gained by Marilyn Munroe, who blazed trail over five continents, as the sex symbol of her time,

holding many eligible men in the grip of a carnal craze, and alas lending suddenly and ignominously at a very impressionable age, in a ghastly suicide, unable to bear the inner contradictions of her own making and thoroughly dissatisfied with the image she only had helped to create of herself? Or, do you like the thrill of hurtling round the moon with a sweet heart in the sharing? Or, is it the crown of Wimbledon, the rubber of the Ashes, the glamour of a boxing Title or, a crasher at the turf? Would it be the more sophisticated glory, though would be repetition now, of basking awhile on the Roof of the world, Everest? Or, the more tedious but colourful achievement of sailing over the seas of the World, rounding the two poles, in a yacht constructed of your own, which has earnt a Knighthood for the British sailor? Or simply the popular game of getting easy money by each and every means?" I could multiply examples like these and the lesser. Now which way, friends, lies your ambition? There was another spell of silence, perhaps the fare proving too much for them, but happier this time, because greeted at the parting with a promise that they should be calling again, for "had it not been a wonderful time spent with an Old Boy of their College?"

3. AMBITION AND ASPIRATION AS TWO SIDES OF SAME MEDAL

3:1 In my opinion, 'ambition' is not quite far fetched from 'aspiration'. As a traditional thinking, the two may look widely variant, 'ambition' relating to the temporal field and 'aspiration' belonging to the spiritual sphere. Or if you like it better the two would make as much difference between them as the tern 'gain' would make from the word 'glory'. However modern conditions would seem to ask for an eclipse of whatever fine distinction should exist between the two.

3:2 In our simple Sahaj sense, the two words should make little difference, not more perhaps than would be between tweedledum and tweedledee. In the other schools of philosophy there could be a sabre-rattling between the two terms and the intellectual gymnastics may be interminable so much so that the two should be mutually exclusive. But in our Babuji's New Darshana heralding the Natural Way where one is enjoined to soar high on both the wings-samsara and Nirvana-a specific distinction or difference between the two need not exist. And that is indeed the uniqueness of Sahaj Marg. Whatever the point, the brute fact remains thanks to the traditional ways we are heir to, that two types of questions would arise to the same inquiring mind, situate in different foci of callings and age-groups, irrespective of the fact that both shouldresult, on ultimate analysis, in the same substantive solution. To the younger element; the satisfying question would be. "Of what stuff is your ambition made?" And to the advanced in age, the right question may be: "On what values is your aspiration based"?

4. WHERE THE RIGHT ASPIRATION LEADS

4:1 I have asked the questions several times to myself during the past forty years or so and they have yielded me a rich dividend. They have taken me forth and round, great dreams and great men, in spite of a totally inadequate calling in life. I have nestled long between Bhagat Singh and Gandhi, for that was the first answer suggested to me as was, in-deed, the tempo of the country in the thirties and the early forties. I have moved from Brahma Samaj to Theosophical society if only they are situated nearly opposite to one another in the City of Hyderabad, and were active during my student days. I have gone from Tilak to Tolstoy, from Ramakrishna to Tagore. Among Avatara, I have moved from Lord Rama to Lord Krishna and thence to Lord Budha; among Saints, from Shri Ramana to Shri Ramdas. I have shuttled very much between one Ananda and the other belonging to the better known of the Mutts, Missions and Spiritual Schools and Societies. Of a later development I have shifted from Shrimad Bhagawad Geeta to Shri Ramachandraji.

4:2 The point is this, however, that while outward opportunities in life are seemingly lost or apparently gained, it is important for one, nevertheless, to capture and retain that sense of belonging to the Ultimate, the sense of soaring up to a

higher life, the sense of growing from the lower to higher nature, the sense of expanding from farther to farther limits upto the farthermost attainable, the sense of finding oneself greater than what he is or may be; a growth upwards which elevates and does not estrange, which enlightens but does neither thwart nor stultify, such sense which satisfies as well as fulfils against the routine run of going through the common place and the usual -- may be of a shade and colour in difference, here and there, but same in essence everywhere; revolving and revolving around oneself, and if not to whit, at least for a change, round others too, remaining until the end, the proverbial bull around the village Ghani.

4:3 I am afraid that if one does not question himself anywise, as to the contents of his goal or aspiration, and try to live a life of introspection and vigilance, any Sanjaya can bowl him clean out of his wicket. Mark what happened to Arjuna on the eve of the battle of Kurukshetra. The astute Dhritarashtra had discovered a rent in his Payche, and exploited it to the full by employing Sanjaya to indoctrinate him with a brand of specious Dharma. This was Dhritarashtra's only opportunity to save the war for his one hundred sons, because the scales of justice were loaded heavily on the Pandava side and Arjuna would be a force to reckon with in the battle field. The trick worked to the dot so much so that the following day found Arjuna a very different man, low and forgotten in the duties of his own swadharma, but

stupidly feeling superior to tell Sri Krishna the adharmic consequences of a fratricidal war! Sri Krishna was placed in the unenviable position of having to be taught of Dharma for the upholding and establishing of which he had specifically incarnated himself -- Dharma samsthapanarthaya. Not a thing or situation had changed since the day of Krishna Rayabhara which had thrashed out all the issues thread-bare; No relationships had altered or changed and nothing had arisen new. The Acharyas and Gurus were there as before. The only change was in Arjuna who, overwhelmed with Karpanya, saw the scene quite differently. "Aho bata mahatpapam" wailed Arjuna to the wonder of Krishna as to what fresh elements which did not exist before had constituted that great sin. He continued his performance for the longest duration at any time in the entire Geeta: "Kulakshaya Kritam Dosham, Mitra Drohecha Patakam, Pradushyanti Kulastriyah, Narake Niyato Vaso" -- as though Krishna had to be educated with all this hundrum stuff -- "Nakankshe Vijayam Krishna, Na Cha Rajyam Sukhanicha", and so, "Visrujya Sasaram Chapam" -- pathetic case of a total psychological collapse. This would not be much unlike the case of one who, unable to bear the crosses of life, suddenly feels what stupidity it is all, gets stirred to the glory of sanyasa, and equipping himself with a Kamandulu and the Ochre robe, quietly walks out of his home, sermonising as he goes: "Mayameti Idam Jagat," and so be done with it, lock, stock, and barrel!

4:4 Nor would it be a wisdom, perhaps to cross one's fingers and sit still, hoping to have something bright turn round the corner, each moment, which for no good reason is imagined, all the time, as increasingly imminent. Little wonder that, like all exercises in such kind, one ends only in an investiture of idiocy, if he does not also fall a total prey to imbecility.

4:5 There is a common feeling that material or spiritual good is a carry forward from the previous births and so how can one help the Vidhi'? While this may be true, it does not square with the hard facts of life. Men are always found striving for this or that in the world and as long as this concession to human effort is there it will be idle to think otherwise. So the common run of people have to go through the mill and help themselves out initially as far as they would, for God to lend His unfailing hand for the rest of the sadhana and for the ultimate jump. If there were no psychological preparedness, so to say, for a high aim, the least title rent in the psyche is bound to be exploited by dame doubt. And when one is given to doubting and becomes a Samsayat-manah, the obvious stated in the Geeta happens as an inescapable consequence - - - "Samsayatma Vinasyati, Nayam Lokosthi, Na Param, Na Sukham Samsayatmanah." It is not every one who has the fortune of having been fully prepared and ripened over past janmas -- Aneka janma Samsiddah -- so

that he may attain to liberation without further-ado. The Vamadeva is a rare bird in spirituality. So one has to develop the craving for God.

4:6 At any rate I believe that the answer to the right question addressed to oneself should take one to the founts of Perennial Wisdom. What would then remain is the advent in one's life, of a perfect Master, a Sadguru or a Qutub. Such a one only and alone is competent to deliver an aspirant to the ultimate goal. In regard to finding a Perfect Master what has occurred to me and many others must and should occur to any of you, and perhaps at a much earlier age than has been our lot. I find now that all the tensions and other distractions of life which used to palgue me before are eased, more or less, and I am enable to lead a simple and contended life with the solid hope and faith that the highest gift open to mankind is in the easy hand of my Master to bestow at the opportune moment; meanwhile, myself duly observing the course of sadhana prescribed, and perhaps making artless petitions for earlier conferment or so which is what but happens to every child looking up to his mother as the supreme source of his satisfactions or satiations.

5. A UNIQUELY CONTENDED LIFE

5:1 Again a clash between the two age-groups. The young in age would ask: "why should I turn away from a paying career and stop making hay while the Sun shines? The older in age may like to labour and save for the posterity even after the hard experiences of the worth of such attempts by their forbears in their own time. I should be content to answer the both by a quotation from the: "Light of Asia."

5:2 Lord Buddha had compassion on Sujata who raised him to life, as it were, by her feeding him tenderly with the delicacy she had brought with her to offer to the Vanadevata in gratitude for bestowing a male child to her.

Asked Buddha :

"Dost thou truly find it sweet enough only to live? Can life and love suffice?"

Answered Sujata :

"Worshipful! My heart

....

It is enough for me to feel life's Sun-shine
In my Lord's Grace and my baby's smile.
Making the loving summer of our home.
Pleasant my days pass filled with household cares

From Sun-rise when I wake to praise the Gods,

....

And set mx handmaids to their tasks, till noon
When my Lord lays his head upon my lap.

....

How should I not be happy blest so much,
And bearing him this boy whose tiny hand
Shall lead his soul to Swarga, if it need?

....

Ah, Sir! I know there might be woes to bear,

....

If this my babe pass first I think my heart
Would break -- almost I hope my heart would break!

....

But if death called Senani, I should mount
The pile and lay that dear head in my lap,
My daily way, rejoicing when the torch,
Lit the quick flame and rolled the choking smoke,

For it is written if an Indian wife
Die so, her love shall give her husband's soul
For every hair upon her head a crore
Of years in Swarga. Therefore, fear I not,
And therefote, Holy Sir! My life is glad.

....

What good I see humbly I seek to do,
And live obedient to the law, in trust,
That what will come and must come, shall
come well."

Then spoke Buddha :

"Thou teachest those who teach
Wiser than wisdom; grow thou flower

....

Thou who has worshipped me I worship thee!"

Sujata has given an indelible shade of answer and Buddha has blessed it for an all-time Beneficience.

6. WHEREFORE THE NEED FOR GOD ?

6:1 Practicalisls would ask: "Why should I turn to God or toward any ideal for that matter, when I see in experience, that both these do not reward the honest and the virtuous, but are often found to ally themselves with the vicious and the wicked?" In my humble opinion, this question seeks to relegate God to the low role of a Municipal or Governmental authority whose ignominous account has very aptly been stated by an Ex-I.C.S. in his titled letter: "Self-criticism at Seventy" summarised as a solicitude directly proportional to the grease applied to their palm, but otherwise apt to be quietly indifferent to anything addressed to them. The question would also be the reflection of a chronic and acute variety of frustration and despondency which are poison to both the spiritual and temporal lives. It does, at any rate, arise out of a wrong premise in thinking and from a general incompetency in facing up to the challenges of life and bearing with its crosses. Life is not or has never at any time been one long stratch of lush green but is made up of both the rough and the smooth, to be taken together very necessarily. Geeta has these words of wisdom for such: Na Kartutvam Na Karmani Lokasya Srjati Prabhuh; Na Karma Phalasamyogam, Svabhavasthu Pravartate:

The Lord of the World createth nothing,
Neither act nor agent, nor fruit nor deed;

The Unity of fruit and deed is passion's play-
thing,

A product of man's own nature in need.

And again : Na Datte Kasyacit Papam Na Civa Skrtam Vibhuh, Ajnanenavrtam Jnanam, Tena Muhyanti Jantavah:

The Lord has no use either for man's sin or his virtue.

It is his delusion for sure, with ignorance veiling his wisdom true.

6:2 The question may arise; should we not desire what should be legitimate for us to have? By all means do. You should have not only the cream of this World but aspsre for best of both the Worlds. There are somethings however that nobody has the right to desire but for which too prayers are invoked to God and offerings and ceremonies made for it, namely, to desire for the fruits of crime or wrong-doing. Other things too may be legitimately desired by people on one level of spiritual development, but should not be desired (and in-deed cease to be desired) by those on another, higher level. In my opinion, a steadfast aspirant should ask for nothing and refuse nothing, but should restcontent to leave himself in the arms of divine Providence without wasting time him any desire; except perhaps to will what God wills for him.

7. THIRD COMMANDMENT OF SAHAJ MARG AS THE HIGHEST GOAL OF HUMAN LIFE

7:1 Let alone, and leave apart the scripturos which are committed to the ultimate ward and have to say it in one form or the other. Even Napolean Bonaparte, a rank militarist, is credited to have said: "The only conquests which are permanent and leave no regrets, are our conqueststst over ourselves." A Truthless conqueror who did not allow any one to steal the thunder as long as the going was good and who had kept the whole of Europe quaking at his word seems to have grown spiritual teeth on his military gums! The inescapable lesson, therefore, is that in our life we have one side which is finite, where we exhaust ourselves at every step, but still are eager to take credit for the doings -- Mithya Charasya – and we have another side, where both our aspiration and enjoyment could be infinite.

7:2 To return for awhile to K.P.S. Menon's "Selfcriticism at Seventy," he shows that no credit need be due to any one for whatever success achieved in the worldly career and so had turned down the Saptati celebrations planned by his friends and admirers. He has said: "What matters is not what other people think but what one feels oneself. I feel, without any false humility, that such a celebration is undeserved. In fact, the very idea fills me with a sense of unworthiness. I have

been singularly fortunate in life, and, I suppose, as things go, successful. But success is not the test of greatness. The true test of greatness is: "What has a man done to improve the lot of his fellowmen?" The practicalists have been answered, so to say, by a Scripture of wide renown, by a military genius who did not know the word 'impossible' as existing in his dictionary, and a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service which was the highest ambition of the youth of then India and rightly called: a heaven-born service."

7:3 The Third Commandment of Sahaj Marg spells the supreme aspiration for life, namely, complete oneness with God. The other commandments provide the design and the pattern, and the way of life under that supreme auspices. By these happy commandments Sahaj Marg would have us express, the immensity of the Infinite in every thing around us as "Life Immense" Prano Virat expressed in the works we do, in the things we use, in men and women with whom we deal, in the enjoyment of the world with which we are surrounded -- Tena Tyaktvena Bhunjeeta as Isa would have it. Sahaj Marg enjoins us to let the soul permeate our surroundings and create itself in all things and show its fulness by fulfilling needs of all times. It tells us that this life of ours has been filled with the gifts of the Divine Giver -- Ishwara dattam. It advises us to do our duties with God as the inspirer and the ordainer of all, the real doer being He, and we at best, as the Nimitta-

matras. It teaches us that under such an auspices the weight of the works will not cling to us and create impressions -- Vasanas. For, as long as work divinely flows with life, it expresses our life, but when it clings, and weighs our deeds and thoughts it impedes, and shows not the life but itself.

7:4 Therefore we have to attain to the wholeness of our Being, for as long as we hug to the partness of it, which is our life in the external world, our life must remain a torment and should continue to be a life of mere habits but when, on the touch of the Infinite, our life is rescued from distractions, all the conflicts and contradictions of it are reconciled; knowledge, love and action are harmonized; pleasure and pain become one in beauty, enjoyment and renunciation become equal in goodness; the breach between the finite and infinite fills with love and overlows; every moment carries its message of the terna!.

7:5 We have often heard the Indian mind described by Western critics as metaphysical, because it is ready to soar in the infinite. But it has to be noted that the Infinite is not mere matter of philosophical speculation to us. The nobler part of our literature deals with spiritually, because God with us is not a distant God. He belongs to our homes as well as to our hearts. We feel His nearness to us in all the human relationship of love and affection. In the woman who is good we feel Him, in the Man who is true we

know Him, in our children He is born again and again, the Eternal Child. Our domestic occurrences, such as the birth of a son, or the coming of the daughthr from her husband's house to her parents, and her departure again, in-deed, in every domestic ceremony we observe, there is apart from the social and personal side, the Divine counterpart and He is the Chief guest whom we honour.

8. THE CLARION CALL OF SAHAJ MARG

8:1 In his wonderful little book entitled: "Reality at Dawn." Shri Babuji has said with a simplicity and directness, characteristic of all his writings, that spirituality has to be met on a near war-footing. "We must march," says he, "On, the path of realisation like a brave soldier with full faith and confidence not minding the difficulties or reverses.', Such a call ringing with a militant resurgence must attract the attention of all the ambition-dwelters. Further, the self-confidence which master speaks of is of a rare and pioneering kind. "It is absurd to think," he says, "even for a moment, that we are in any way too week or deficient to acquire the highest state of perfection ever attained so far even by the greatest sages of the past." What a spirit of spartanism has been spelt in these words, rare to find before, in the annals of self-culture? One sees, battled again as it were before him, that famous battle of Thermopylae, where but three hundred brave soldiers -- worthy sons of the City State of Sparta dermined to lay their lives in defence of their dear City, completely cut up and annihiliated an overwhelming number of the superiorly equipped armies of King Xerxes, the murderous invader. It should look thus that even if a hundred thousand self-informed scholars or pundits of traditional repute would tell a true and steadfast aspirant in the

Sahaj Marg that the Ultimate is impossible for him to achieve, he may, for needs of courtesy, give a patient hearing but should the wise-acres persist derisively to nail their point down, he will treat them much the way Alexander the Great is said to have been treated by a great Master of Northern India. It seems that during his victorious march down the plains of India, Alexander met a saint who did not care to do obesianee to him, being a mere temporal victor. Enraged at this insult, the saint was clapped in Jail, Next day, Alexander went to the captive saint and introducing himself as the victorious emperor, commanded him to ask for a favour which would be granted whatever it be. The saint looked full at the monarch's face and with a serenity born of true wisdom is reported to have replied: "You obstruct Sun's light. Please move away a tittle. This is all the boon I ask of thee."

8:2 Indeed the saint is made of a tougher stamina than the soldier, for the aim of spiritual training is to make people become selfless in every circumstance of life while the aim of military training is to make them selfless only in certain very special circumstances and in relation to only certain classes of human beings. The saint is one who knows that every moment of our human life is a moment of crisis; for at every moment we are called upon to make an all-important decision -- to choose between the way that leads to death and spiritual darkness and the way that leads towards light and life; between interests exclusively tempo-

ral and the external order; between our personal will, or the will of some projection of our personality and the will of God.

8:3 There appears to be a common illusion that a realised person should look different, and do and be and act and behave the opposite of the ordinary run of people. The famous example of Arjuna himself is there. When Krishna told him: "When one's intellect crosses beyond the mire of delusion and is unperturred by what has been heard or yet to and shall stand immovable and steady in the self then one shall have attained self-realisation," Arjuna was perturbed and agitated and questioned thus: "O Kesava, what is the description of him who has steady wisdom, and who is merged in the super-conscious State? How does one of steady wisdom speak, how does he sit, and how does he walk?"

8:4 Sahaj Marg would at once dispel such an illusion. The state envisaged in it is not one of a somatic stupor with its outer peculiarities but a Sahaj Samadhi which Master has described as: "The finest type of concentration. In this State a man is busy with his work, his mind-being absorbed in it, but in the inner most core of his heart he is settled on the real thing. With his conscious mind he is busy with the external work while at the same time his subconscious mind is busy with Divine thonghts. He is all the while in a state of Samadhi although apparently he is busy with the worldly work. This is the highest form of Samadhi and little remains to be done after a man has entered this state permanently."

9. FREEDOM FROM FETTERS

9:1 Sahaj Marg which confers the state of Sahaj Samadhi should be satisfying to both the young and the old in age. It has no truck with the orthodox religion. No doubt, religion has been the greatest cementing force and whole peoples are drawn into one influence by the power it has weilded. It is easier for one to know the other as a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Christian, a Mohammadan, a Parsee, a Jew or so than as so many nationalities. But some non-essential beliefs of religion have been causes for dissensions and war. When one holds to a doctrinnaire view and persists in a sermon that such and such is the only Saviour, and not any other, he runs into grave spiritual peril. To take only one instance; incarnation, -- Christianity believes that there has been and can be only one Avatar, son of God, Jesus, and Mohammadanism believes that there can be only one, and the only one Rasool, Mohammed the Prophet. Whatever its other pitfalls Hinduism can accommodate not only the traditional ten Avataras but will not look askance if the list were swelled to include every one, because it does not really matter to its course. Therefore we have seen that Christianity and Islam has been disgraced by more and bloodier crusades, interdenominational wars, persecutions and proselytising Imperialism than has witnessed the history of

Hinduism and Buddhism. Absurd and idolatrous doctorines, affirming the quasi-divine nature of sovereign states and their rulers, have led peoples into innumerable political wars and mass murder for Religion's sake. On the other hand, the politics if any, of those whose goal and aspiration is beyond transience, are always pacific and and peaceful; it is the idolators of past and present, of reactionary memory and Utopian dream, who do the persecuting and make the Wars.

9:2 The doors of Shri Ramachandran Mission are open wide to all aspirants for higher life irrespective, of caste, creed, community or sex; denomination, learning, status or wealth. We hold to no doctrionnaire definitions of God but believe in being able to experience Him as He is; whether called by others as immanent as well as transcendent, supra-personal or personal; Sakar or Nirakar, resurgent or insurgent. We do not look upon God as a developing entity, as an emergent God starting unspiritually as alpha and becoming gradually more divine, as the aeons rolled on, towards some hypothetical omega. Rather Sri Babuji would love to call the Mission a happy family, family with a small but containing 'f' of familiarity, fatherliness and filiality and a capital "F" for Universal Understanding and Brotherhood. He does not ask for a formal worship accompanied to a particular rite or ceremony. For him God has the throne of His choice in the innermost core of the devotee's heart, but not in the man's choice of a Church, Temple, Mosque

or a Curudwara. He does not employ any code to bind us to him, rather he has set us in perfect freedom with a minima of Sadhana to observe He wears no forbidden air, is inviting to all, his ample roof being shared liberally by men and women of all walks and callings in life varying taste, habit and custom. He has no personal charisma as God himself does not have such. A perfect host on the house-hold plane he is highly solicitous of the least little guest: Ever having his Being in God, his spiritual ministry is as bounteous as it is continuous, as tenderly as it is to the extent needed by each.

9:3 If you should have it that way, Sahaj Marg is a new turn in Religion in the Ramakrishna sense of Religion meaning only Realisation and no less. If it has no truck with the customary religious practices like the ritual, symbol, sacrament, ceremony, liturgy, Fatwa, or such like, it is because these have lost their value, even to remind those who take part in them, of the true Nature of Things, remind them of what ought to be and of what actually might be their own relation to the world and its Divine Base. Because also as Master has emphasized in the "Reality at Dawn" that Spirituality begins where religion ends, and Sahaj Marg is a way of spirituality. It delivers the Upanishadic words : "Yad Bhavam tad Bhavati" by taking your constant thought of God to God Himself. It is indeed the grandest of the wisdom's roads, the most effective of all come acrcss which does not suffer us to interminable ceremonies, hard tapasya, acts involving physical mortification, so on and so forth.

10. AN OPEN INVITATION

10:1 Irrespective of Age and Clime, mankind every where has been sharing the same substantial aspiration for it happens with us human beings, there is a source of suffering deeper than with the animals. We have to seek our livelihood and hold out against all the enmities of nature and man. That too is not all. The wonder of it is that man, being born in the same world as the animals, and having the same vital questions to deal with, still has something else for which he struggles and cares, though it is not quite definitely realized as to what it is. It comes to us in glimpses, and when we are in wealth, wallowing in prosperity, or luxury or ease -- when we are surrounded by all the things of the world -- still men feel that these things are not sufficient, and therefore there rings out the prayer, not to the natural forces of the earth -- such as air, water, fire -- but to some being whom man has not fully realized or known. The prayer spells out : "Save me" -- O do not smile me with death" – Na himsi.

10:2 I will not deal with the depths and profoundities and subtleties of Sahaj Marg which can be had from the writings of Master, being revelations of reality from his supreme and super-conscious state of Samadhi. His words are the true authority for all such aspects of Sahaj Marg.

I cannot deal with the philosophical excellences of Sahaj Marg which is the domain of the Doctors of Philosophy. I shall not deal with the practical aspects or working details of Sahaj Marg which is the province of the Preceptors. I dare not deal with the experiences of Sahaj Marg which should be specific to each Abhyasi and would vary from person to person. I shall be content only to mention a few lines regarding the aspect of prayer in it, as I see, for it represents to me the highest of human aspirations. It is, so to say, the spiritualisation of ambition of the youth, which when so done, elevates ambition itself and raises its place and status to heights never known or dreamt of before.

10:3 When we pray according to the scripture--Na Himsi, we have not prayed for exemption from physical death, because we all known that we must die and so the prayer is not for our physical immortality or the perpetuation of physical security as were craved in those poineering efforts of generations of mankind over the search for the "philosopher's stone" and "The Elixir of Life." Far from these does the scriptural prayer imply. For man has felt in himself instinctively that this life is not final -- that he must strive for the higher life. And then he cries to God --" Do not leave me in this region of death. It does not satisfy my soul. I eat and drink and sleep, but I am not satisfied. I do not find my good in this -- I starve." As the child's cry is for the mother's food, which is satisfying as well as nourishing only when she

supplies it out of her own life, so we cry to the eternal Mother." My soul is smitten with death because, it finds no sustenance in its surroundings."

10:4 Therefore, our Mission prayer transcends the usual classifications of prayer as being the processes of petition, Iitercession, adoration and contemplation. Master says in "Reality at Dawn." The most important and unfailing means of success is the prayer. It connects our link with God to whom we surrender ourselves with love and devotion. In prayer we stand before Him as an humble suppliant presenting to Him our true state and completely resigning ourselves to His will. This is the true form of prayer and as a true devotee we must also feel satisfied with the will of the Master. It is a fooly to pray to God for petty worldly ends, except in most exceptional cases when peace of mind is greatly disturbed for want of bare necessities. We should always pray to the Supreme Master, the Omnipotent and the Omniscient alone with a mind totally absorbed in love and submission to him forgetring even ourselves altogether. This is the proper way of offering prayer which in such a state seldom goes uerewarded." This quotation affirms in its proper set up of importance what is indeed generally believed that it is all but impossible for a human being to practise contemplation without preparing for it by some kind of adoration and without feeling the need to revert at more or less frequent intervals so intercesrion and some form at least of petition.

10:5 Six times in each year, our magazine circulates to serve the abhyasis covered over the length and breadth of the country and even abroad as in west Germany, France and Italy, where we have preceptors to do the Master's work. The opening page of each issue over the years the magazine has been in circulation contains the Prayer of our Mission. Such is considered its importance as a means to Realisation. Our Prayer is unique in many respects. It is addressed to God direct. It speaks of Him as the real goal in life and so makes a direct link with Him without the unnecessary media of high sounding expressions of praise and other ritual. In short it cuts the Spiritual red tape to a remarkable degree. Then we lay our petty wishes bare to Him and accept these as obstacles to spiritual advancement and not as matters of personal glorifications; we know we are absolutely helpless; therefore, we turn an utter beggar at His door and say: "Thou art the only God and Power to deliver us upto the final stage -- a super-masterly stroke of the sage of Shahajahanpur, our Master, spuaring the identity of interests and aspirations, a supreme voice of surrender, our prayer asks for no earthly boon but of the natural yearing of our souls to join with Him - - the Base and the Source. Our prayer represents thus not only human wisdom but also our utter beggarliness before the King of Kings who has the super-finest simplicity to stretch out his right hand to us and say : "What hast thou to give to me?" Utterly confused at this Kingly

jest of opening the royal palm to a beggar, we seem to be in many minds but the power of the prayer itself would bestow on us the wisdom of placing our hearts in the hollows of the Royal Palm where it fits best and is rewarded by the highest gift ever has been opened to mankind in the annals of our Spiritual History.

10:6 Welcome so, mothers and brothers, unto the auspices of this Great Master and into his unique way, the Sahaj Marg, which is the hignest blessing to the Samsari, come into his infectious hug which many an abhyast must have enjoyed with a tearful joy, with an experience gained too, taking him steps ahead in the spiritual sojourn. Human aspiration cannot be contained by the Glamour of the outward, for it is not in our physical body that we can find our fulfilment, nor in the goods of the world, called the good things of life. It is not also in our mental orga nization nor too in our emotional set-up. As already said, it is in that oneness which Sahaj Marg holds aloft as the human goal, that deeper unity, that ultimate Base in us, ever-beckoning but seldom heeded to by us who are steeped in the madness of worldly dursuit. Yes, the Divine Base in us which from the centre of our world radiates towards its circumference; which being in our body, trancends our body; which is in our mind, yet grows beyond our mind; which through the things belonging to us, expresses something very vital that is not in them; which while occupying our present overflows its banks of past and future. It is the

consciousness of the Infinite which makes the Paradox of an inexhaustible abundance, more than itself, more than as it is seem, known and used, striving to make its expression immortal and therefore of the highest of our aspirations, not asking us to run away from our world but inviting us to make the whole world ourown. Our beloved Master has opened the doors to Ultimate Reality through his way, the Sahaj Marg, simple as it is serene, subtle as it is sure, secure and safe as it is Sahaj-natural. Let us enter its portals with the faith and steadfastness of a Nachiketas - that Upanishadic lad who had the courage of his conviction to defy death and spurn all the wealth of the world, so to say, heaped on him and implore: "Ephemeral these; O Death, these tend to decay the vigour of all the senses in man. Even the longest life is in deed short. Thine alone be the chariots, the dance and the music -- Taviva Vahas Tava Nritya Gite -- O Lard, keep all the wealth and dominion over lands to yourself. But tell me that in which men and Gods have this doubt and which is about the Great Passing Beyond." Nachiketas counted astutely for he was made of a sterner stuff. He was not taken off by the lure of gold and treasures and power and pelf because these he held to be the lesser of the losses. He went in for the glory of a greater gain, a larger life immune from the ravages of Time. Such were the contents of his aspiration and may you not all share that immortal life which is being made available to you for no material sacrifice whatever by

the grace of a benefactor of mankind? The highest approach in this very life is possible to have through the transforming process of Pranabuti -- a transmission of life force into your very heart, the highest of Divine Graces being bestowed by a dear Master of such supreme yogic attainment, which shall take us to a life unto which, each one of you are fortunate to be both called and chosen at one stroke, as it were, and into which every sentient being, in one way or another, sooner or later, must surely come.

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